This listing of claims will replace all prior versions of the claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (currently amended) In a microscope having a non-scanning illumination device for illuminating a subject over a field of view by directing light along an illumination beam path through a main objective of said microscope or in a region of a main objective of said microscope, and a plurality of optical components in said illumination beam path which diffract or refract the light, the improvement comprising:

a mechanism for moving at least one of said plurality of optical components which diffract or refract the light so that a reduction of light intensity incident upon the subject over the field of view occurs because of the movement of said at least one optical component.

2. (previously amended) The improvement according to claim 1, wherein said mechanism removes said at least one optical component from said illumination beam path to cause said reduction of light intensity.

3. (currently amended) The improvement according to claim 1, wherein said mechanism ~~changes a position of~~ displaces said at least one optical component ~~in~~ along said illumination beam path to cause said reduction of light intensity.

4. (previously amended) The improvement according to claim 2, wherein said plurality of optical components includes a collector lens, and said mechanism includes a manually operable drive system for removing said collector lens from said illumination beam path to cause said reduction of light intensity.

5. (previously amended) The improvement according to claim 2, wherein said plurality of optical components includes a collector lens, and said mechanism includes a motorized drive

system for removing said collector lens from said illumination beam path to cause said reduction of light intensity.

6. (previously amended) The improvement according to claim 2, wherein said plurality of optical components includes a mirror prism and a light-concentrating optical system adjacent thereto for conveying illuminating light through said main objective, and said mechanism removes at least a portion of said light-concentrating optical system from said illumination beam path.

7. (original) The microscope according to claim 6, wherein said mechanism pulls said at least a portion of said light-concentrating optical system from said illumination beam path.

8. (original) The microscope according to claim 6, wherein said mechanism pivots said at least a portion of said light-concentrating optical system out of said illumination beam path.

9. (previously amended) The microscope according to claim 1, wherein said plurality of optical components includes an assembly of optical elements in said illumination beam path, and said mechanism removes said assembly from said illumination beam path to cause said reduction of light intensity.

10. (previously amended) The microscope according to claim 1, wherein said plurality of optical components includes an assembly of optical elements in said illumination beam path, and said mechanism displaces said assembly along said illumination beam path to cause said reduction of light intensity.

11. (canceled)

12. (currently amended) A method for darkening an illuminated subject under a microscope having a non-scanning illumination device with an integrated illumination beam path in which a

plurality of optical components are arranged, said method comprising the step of:

moving at least one of said plurality of optical components so that a reduction of light intensity incident upon the subject over the field of view occurs because the movement of said at least one optical component causes light to arrive at the subject in a more diffuse or defocused fashion,[[.]] wherein said step of moving at least one of said plurality of optical components comprises removing a collector lens from said illumination beam path.

13. (canceled)

14. (previously re-presented) A method for darkening an illuminated subject under a microscope having a non-scanning illumination device with an integrated illumination beam path in which a plurality of optical components are arranged, said method comprising the step of:

moving at least one of said plurality of optical components so that a reduction of light intensity incident upon the subject over the field of view occurs because the movement of said at least one optical component causes light to arrive at the subject in a more diffuse or defocused fashion, wherein said step of moving at least one of said plurality of optical components comprises pivoting a mirror.

15. (previously re-presented) A method for darkening an illuminated subject under a microscope having a non-scanning illumination device with an integrated illumination beam path in which a plurality of optical components are arranged, said method comprising the step of:

moving at least one of said plurality of optical components so that a reduction of light intensity incident upon the subject over the field of view occurs because the movement of said at least one optical component causes light to arrive at the subject in a more diffuse or defocused fashion, wherein said step of moving at least one of said plurality of optical components comprises displacing an assembly of optical elements along said illumination beam path.